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THE STUDY OF SCHILLER.

Schiller. Sein Leben und seine Werke, dargestellt von J. MINOR. I Bd. Berlin, Weidmann. 1890. 8vo, pp. 591.

The study of SCHILLER in Germany during the last few decades has not kept equal pace with the activity displayed in other fields of literary history. We have had, it is true, GÖDEKE'S invaluable historico-critical edition of SCHILLER'S works; we have had his correspondence with KÖRNER, COTTA, the Duke of AUGUSTENBURG and others; we have had the investigations of BOAS, BOXBERGER, DÜNTZER, FIELITZ, MINOR in certain branches of his work and in certain periods of his life. But no book has appeared until recently which undertook to represent the whole of SCHILLER'S development with the same comprehensiveness of view and with the same exhaustive treatment of the materials at hand with which HOFFMEISTER approached this task half a century ago. It is, however, evident that at present we are standing at the threshold of a new epoch in SCHILLER literature. In 1885 WELTRICH published the first instalment of a life of SCHILLER promising to combine painstaking accuracy of detail with a broad and far-reaching perspective; in 1888 there followed the first volume of BRAHM'S "Schiller," a book which, with all its faults of mannerism and theatrical display, undoubtedly brings before us a more striking picture of the poet than we have of most other great men of German literature. And now Professor MINOR gives us a work which seems destined to be the worthiest successor of HOFFMEISTER'S biography and to serve for a long time to come as the principal authority on Germany's greatest dramatist.

The present volume, although it does not carry us further than to SCHILLER'S flight from Stuttgart, indicates clearly enough what the tendency and character of the whole will be. A masterly parallel between GOETHE and SCHILLER stands at its head.

"The view of GOETHE'S development impresses us with the same feeling of necessity with which we look at a natural process; he grew into what he was. SCHILLER made himself. Out of the hard struggle which from early youth he fought with nature he came forth victorious; he managed in spite of multi-

farious hindrances to shape his life according to an immanent idea. What he had received of natural gifts, as well as that which with iron industry he had acquired in severe self-discipline and incessant endeavor, was his inalienable possession, of which no power on earth could rob him. In the first verses of his hand which have been preserved to us, on the childhood threshold of his art, we are met by the same image of the all-surveying, forever-enduring sun with which at the height of his productiveness he closed one of his greatest creations. The contrast of sense and reason, the discord between the material and spiritual nature of man, is the problem of his whole life, on which from early youth, acting, writing, thinking, he exercises all his powers: in the fulness of his manhood he succeeds in solving it."

These words may give some idea of the main thread running through Prof. MINOR'S book. Of the richness of detail, the accuracy of statement, the even flow of the narrative, the masterly way in which the poet is shown in the man and the man as part of his time, it is impossible, within the limits of this notice, to convey an adequate idea.

As an instance of MINOR'S superiority over his predecessors in exhaustiveness and completeness of treatment, I would mention the passages referring to the "Leichenfantasie." Most commentators on SCHILLER'S poems have contented themselves, in the case of this youthful production, with pointing out its defects, its pompousness of expression, its lack of reality. Or, if they, like BRAHM, try to justify the poem, they do so on purely æsthetic grounds. MINOR, instead of either defense or criticism, narrates in full the circumstances which gave rise to the poem, analyzes carefully SCHILLER'S state of mind when he wrote it, lays bare the literary threads which connect this poem with other productions of the time; and thus makes us understand it as a manifestation of a certain phase in the poet's development. The gloomy atmosphere of the Karlsschule, the pessimistic brooding of the youthful poet, the terrible shock which he received from the sudden death of his friend HOVEN, the language of KLOPSTOCK, of OSSIAN, of SCHUBART, of HÖLTY—in short all the elements which constitute this poem—are brought before our eyes in their full significance, and in this way even an abortive literary attempt is made to reveal to

us the yearnings of the poet's heart and to throw a light on the general tendencies of the literature of his time.

The same broad, impartial, and truly historical spirit pervades the whole volume. There is hardly an incident in SCHILLER's life which in this book does not receive some new or broader aspect. Of especial interest are the passages about SCHILLER's relations to KARL EUGEN, which, by English writers particularly, have been so frequently and so badly misrepresented; the chapter upon the philosophical instruction in the Karlsschule, in which the attractive and inspiring figure of ABEL is brought out in full relief; the careful investigation of SCHILLER's activity as editor of the *Württembergische Repertorium*, which lends new color to his strong affinity to the Suabian soil and to his position as leader of a provincial school of writers; and, above all, the comprehensive and searching analysis of the "Räuber," which one might almost feel inclined to hope would be the last word of criticism on this much abused and much exalted drama. It is a pity that Mr. NEVINSON, the latest English biographer of SCHILLER ("Great Writers Series," London, 1889), should not have waited with the publication of his book until after the appearance of Professor MINOR's work. Otherwise he would hardly have disfigured his pages by such a statement as this: "It is difficult for a modern Englishman to read even the bare plot of such a school-boy production [the "Robbers"] without a sense of the burlesque."

The volume closes with a most careful and complete bibliography, which in itself would be sufficient to make this work an unfailing guide and an indispensable authority to any student of SCHILLER.

KUNO FRANCKE.

Harvard University.

FRENCH LITERATURE.

A Primer of French Literature, by F. M. WARREN, Ph. D., Associate in Modern Languages in the Johns Hopkins University. Boston: D. C. HEATH & Co. 1889. 12mo, pp. vi, 250.

The study of French Literature, especially of the mediæval period, has offered till lately

many a difficulty, owing mainly to the lack of a comparatively complete and thoroughly reliable and scientific English Primer. Much credit is consequently due to Prof. WARREN for the conscientious effort he has made to help us in that line. Mr. SAINTSBURY, it is true, had already published a 'Primer of French Literature', but his work, excellent as far as it goes, is necessarily wanting in details, and moreover it is not divided in the way best adapted to facilitate the student's researches. Mr. SAINTSBURY has succeeded in giving us a very general outline of the subject, and indeed a careful perusal of his Primer shows views at once broad and sympathetic, but the general character of the work is lacking in critical and systematic presentation. In Prof. WARREN's, on the contrary, we have a thorough mastery of the subject, accurate and tolerably exhaustive lists of authors and works, and, what is of still greater advantage, well defined and delimited literary periods.

Of special interest to the students of Old French will be the painstaking treatment or rather condensation of Mediæval Literature, as well as the classification of epic poetry. This period requires special tact in handling the material, giving a judicious estimate of authors and works, tracing out the origins of a *chanson de geste*, a *roman d'aventure*, a legend, a tale or a fableau, and finally apportioning the proper share of importance to influences Celtic, Teutonic, Latin and Oriental. This is by no means an easy task, and although due recognition is made by Prof. WARREN of the help afforded him by GASTON PARIS' excellent treatise, 'La Littérature française au moyen âge', still ample room was left for independent skill and ability.

The influence of Mediæval French Literature on the various literatures of Europe, as shown by translations and imitations, has been touched upon here and there, yet the student would have been gratified by additional details, especially when such details were at the command and within the reach of the author. This I say without losing sight of the necessarily limited size and compass of a Primer, because the treatment of individual or reciprocal literary influence must be held to be a point of vital importance. I will venture